

# **Handling Incoming Mail, Suspense-Controlled Actions, and White House, Congressional, and Foreign National Correspondence**

## **JPR 1450.5C**

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Office of the Director

April 2005

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National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center**  
Houston, Texas



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Original signed by

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Director

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**Table of Contents**

Cover

Change Record

Section 1 – Responsibilities & Definitions

Section 1.1 – Definitions

Section 1.2 – Responsibilities

Section 2 – Procedures

Section 2.1 – Mail Handling Policy

Section 2.2 – Handling General Incoming Correspondence

Section 2.3 – Handling Classified Correspondence

Section 2.4 – Congressional/White House Correspondence and other Suspense-Controlled Mail

Section 2.5 – Correspondence to Foreign Nationals

Section 2.6 – Procedures for Preparing Foreign Correspondence

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**Change Record**

Rev.	Date	Originator/Phone	Description
A	2/18/03	Honey Malecki/33791	Major rewrite
B	8/12/04	Honey Malecki/33791	Change from JPG to JPR and change in procedures in section 2.3
C	04/01/05	Honey Malecki/33791	Rewrite to include information regarding the use of JATS/CMS database and slight title revision. Revision to Sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3

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## **PREFACE**

### **P.1. PURPOSE**

- P.1.1.** To define policy and procedures for handling incoming mail, suspense-controlled actions, and White House, Congressional, and foreign national correspondence.

### **P.2. APPLICABILITY**

- P.2.1.** This policy applies to all organizational elements of JSC.

### **P.3 AUTHORITY**

- P.3.1.** NPR 1450.4, "Handling Congressional Correspondence and Information Concerning Congressional Activities."
- P.3.2.** NPD 1450.12, "Handling Correspondence and Information from the Executive Office of the President."

### **P.4 REFERENCES**

- P.4.1.** NPD 1360.2, "Initiation and Development of International Cooperation in Space and Aeronautics Programs."
- P.4.2.** NPD 1371.5, "Coordination and Authorization of Access by Foreign Nationals and Foreign Representatives to NASA."
- \*P.4.3.** NPR 1450.10, "NASA Correspondence Management and Communications Standards and Style," and JSC Supplement.
- P.4.4.** NPD 2110.1, "Foreign Access to NASA Technology Transfer Materials."
- P.4.5.** JHB 1600.3, "JSC Security Manual."

### **P. 5 CANCELLATION**

- P.5.1** JPR 1450.5B

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# **1. RESPONSIBILITIES & DEFINITIONS**

## **1.1 Definitions.**

- 1.1.1** JSC Employees. Includes all JSC employees and other Federal Government employees under the administrative control of JSC.
- 1.1.2** Foreign National. Any person who is not a citizen, national, permanent resident alien, or immigrant alien of the United States.
- 1.1.3** Foreign Representative. A citizen or national of the United States or an immigrant alien (permanent resident alien) who is acting as a representative, official, or employee of a foreign government, firm, corporation, or person.
- 1.1.4** Correspondence. Any written, typed, or printed communication including electronically transmitted telegram, teletype, or facsimile message, parcel post package, or other item received for distribution or dispatch.
- 1.1.5** Official Mail. Mail received or generated related directly or indirectly to official NASA business. Mail received at the workplace is routinely considered official mail unless it is marked with an indicator such as "Personal" or can be clearly identified as personal. Receipt of personal mail is discouraged at the worksite.
- 1.1.6** Processed Mail/Correspondence. All items received, read and evaluated, and tagged with JSC Form 684 (which records the recipients of the original and information copies and the date received in the Mail Center, as well as the suspense-controlled action number and due date, if applicable).
- 1.1.7** Suspense-Controlled Action. A controlled correspondence action which has been received for the Office of the Director including receipt of a White House or Congressional inquiry.
- 1.1.8** JSC Action Tracking System (JATS)/Correspondence Management System (CMS). The electronic database in which all processed mail/correspondence items and suspense-controlled actions are entered.
- 1.1.9** Congressional Correspondence. All communications that are addressed or referred to NASA employees or organizational elements from Senators, Representatives, their staff members, and staff members of Congressional committees.
- 1.1.10** White House Correspondence. All communications that are addressed or referred to NASA employees or organizational elements from the President, the Vice President, or members of the White House Staff.
- 1.1.11** Public Information. Material that has been published in a journal, announced in the Scientific and Technical Aerospace Report (STAR), published as a formal NASA report, or presented at a meeting to which the general public was invited. (CSTAR material (classified) is not public information.)
- 1.1.12** Classified Correspondence. Any information or material that is owned by, is produced by or for, or is under the control of the U.S. Government which is determined to require protection against unauthorized disclosure and is so designated.

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## **1.2 Responsibilities**

- 1.2.1** The Associate Director (Management) is the liaison with the NASA Headquarters Office of Legislative Affairs and Office of External Relations.
- 1.2.2** The JSC Mail Manager serves as the principal point of contact between the U.S. Postal Service and JSC. All matters pertaining to postal services should be directed to the JSC Mail Manager.
- 1.2.3** The Executive Correspondence Control Officer (ECCO) is the point of contact relating to suspense-controlled action tracking and procedures and to guidelines for White House, Congressional, foreign national, and executive-level correspondence.

## **2. PROCEDURES**

### **2.1 MAIL HANDLING POLICY**

- 2.1.1** All mail transmitted or received by JSC, regardless of origin or addressee, becomes the responsibility of the Mail and Distribution Group for its collection, handling, and distribution. Correspondence described in paragraph 2.2.1 is opened and evaluated by ECCO for processing to ensure that the Office of the Director is made aware of all communications received at JSC that affect management of the Center. Any correspondence received by way of facsimile or received by a JSC organization unopened, other than exceptions described in 2.2.1, which may be judged to directly affect the Office of the Director's management of the Center should also be referred to ECCO immediately for proper handling.
- 2.1.2** Bulk mail or other volume mailings received without JSC mail codes may be returned to the sender or may receive disposition in accordance with instructions from the U.S. Postal Service.

### **2.2 HANDLING GENERAL INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 2.2.1** ECCO opens and distributes, as appropriate, all correspondence addressed to the Office of the Director and to JSC Staff, Directorate, and Program offices, except as indicated below and in 2.2.3.1 thru 2.2.3.4.
  - 2.2.1.1** Mail addressed to AJ/Equal Opportunity Programs and Diversity Management Office.
  - 2.2.1.2** Mail addressed to AL/Legal Office
  - 2.2.1.3** Mail addressed to WJS/Inspector General Office.
  - 2.2.1.4** Mail received for division-level organizations and below.
- 2.2.2** All incoming registered and certified correspondence, with the exception of exclusions indicated in 2.2.1.1 thru 2.2.1.3 and 2.2.3.1 thru 2.2.3.4 is opened and processed, as appropriate, by ECCO. This procedure ensures the proper initial handling of classified material having been transmitted in this fashion.

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- 2.2.3** The following correspondence is not opened by Center Mail Room personnel or ECCO, unless identified as a suspicious mailing per United States Postal Service guidance:
- 2.2.3.1** Mail bearing "Personal," "To Be Opened by Addressee Only," or similar indicators.
  - 2.2.3.2** Mail addressed to contractor organizations, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the Office of Inspector General, or other Federal agencies located at JSC.
  - 2.2.3.3** Mail obviously containing remittances (checks, drafts, money orders, etc.).
  - 2.2.3.4** Mail identified as "Sensitive Source Evaluation Board (SEB) Material" or "Proposal."
- 2.2.4** Correspondence opened and processed by ECCO is forwarded to the addressee or appropriate action office with information copies provided to directorate-level offices, as appropriate, as well as to the Associate Director (Management). Mail that is not opened is routed to the addressee.

### **2.3 HANDLING CLASSIFIED CORRESPONDENCE**

Custody control and accountability procedures for classified mail are prescribed in JHB 1600.3.

### **2.4 CONGRESSIONAL/WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER SUSPENSE-CONTROLLED MAIL**

- 2.4.1** The Center Director signs White House and Congressional correspondence initiated at JSC on JSC letterhead stationery. The Office of the Director may grant exceptions. Contact ECCO for coordination.
- 2.4.2** ECCO serves as the initial processing point for all incoming mail addressed to the Office of the Center Director and for all White House and Congressional correspondence. ECCO assigns the official suspense-control action number and tracks the status of the suspended item for the Office of the Director. Directorate-level offices serve as the points of contact with whom ECCO tracks the actions.
- 2.4.3** All White House, Congressional, and other suspense-controlled mail is opened and dated, and copies are provided to the Government Relations Office, the Center Director, and as applicable, the Headquarters Office of Legislative Affairs. Any such correspondence, including electronic mail, facsimiles, etc., received by a JSC employee or organization that appears not to have been incorporated into the suspense-controlled action system should be reported immediately to ECCO.
- 2.4.4** Suspense-controlled correspondence is marked with a response due date which is, unless specified within the correspondence, 10 working days from dated receipt by ECCO. Congressional and White House correspondence response due date is 3 working days.
- 2.4.5** White House and Congressional suspenses are assigned to the Government Relations Office for reply.

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**2.4.6** For the purpose of implementing a JSC correspondence suspense system, ECCO:

- 2.4.6.1** Prepares and retains one copy of the controlled correspondence for the official suspense control file.
- 2.4.6.2** Furnishes the appropriate action-designated office a copy of the controlled correspondence via the JSC Action Tracking System (JATS)/Correspondence Management System (CMS).

**2.4.7** The assigned action office:

- 2.4.7.1** Retains one copy of the suspended item for suspense control and tracking.
- 2.4.7.2** Notifies ECCO when action is to be reassigned to another office.
- 2.4.7.3** Contacts ECCO for extension assistance when a suspense-controlled correspondence action cannot be completed by the suspense due date.
- 2.4.7.4** In preparing the response, consults guidelines, as needed (found in the JSC Supplement to NPR 1450.10), for response format, signature authority, number of copies required, and coordination. Directs further questions to ECCO.
  - 2.4.7.4.1** Responses to White House or Congressional correspondence, which were addressed directly to personnel at JSC, are prepared in final form for the Center Director's signature. At the time of submission of the signature package to ECCO, also forward the response to ECCO by electronic mail.
  - 2.4.7.4.2** Responses to White House or Congressional correspondence, which were addressed to personnel at Headquarters and forwarded to JSC for action, are prepared in draft form on plain bond paper and plainly marked "DRAFT." Prepare the official file copy for concurrences by all levels of management within the Office of the Director. At the time of submission of the signature package to ECCO, also forward the response to ECCO by electronic mail.

## **2.5 CORRESPONDENCE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS**

Information intended for foreign nationals or foreign representatives may require special handling considerations. Any circumstance not covered by this JPR will be considered by the Associate Director (Management) on a case-by-case basis.

**2.5.1** The following information may not be transmitted to foreign nationals or foreign representatives:

- 2.5.1.1** Material identified for early domestic dissemination. (See JHB 1600.3.)
- 2.5.1.2** Material announcing new results to be first publicized to U.S. audiences, not yet publicly available, except if disclosed in a major international symposium.
- 2.5.1.3** Material identified as non-NASA; e.g., generated by contractors (not using NASA funds) or by other agencies. As appropriate, contractors may be given

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guidance consistent with this JPR. Other agencies have their own policies with which NASA chooses not to interfere.

- 2.5.2** The following information is releasable by Headquarters only (referral from JSC is by the Public Affairs Office):
  - 2.5.2.1** Responses to requests to be placed on a Public Affairs mailing list.
  - 2.5.2.2** Responses to requests for information about areas of responsibility at other Centers.
- 2.5.3** The following information may be transmitted to foreign nationals or foreign representatives but must be submitted undated through ECCO for coordination with the Headquarters External Relations Office for approval and forwarding.
  - 2.5.3.1** All correspondence of any kind from areas designated by Headquarters as sensitive.
  - 2.5.3.2** Responses to requests for visits of foreign nationals. (See NPD 1371.5.)
  - 2.5.3.3** Responses denying requests for published technical material or for technology utilization information that is not available to the general public.
  - 2.5.3.4** Responses to requests for more than a few documents at one time (either different documents or multiple copies of the same document) or repeated requests from the same source.
  - 2.5.3.5** Responses to requests for administrative or operational material, such as source lists, quality control lists, progress or status reports, etc., that are not available to the general public.
- 2.5.4** The following may be released from JSC, with Associate Director (Management) coordination:
  - 2.5.4.1** Information and data conforming to the terms and conditions of an agreement or understanding governing an approved international program or cooperative project.
  - 2.5.4.2** Information and data required by foreign scientists who, through agreements with JSC, are engaged in NASA-sponsored basic research projects. (The cognizant JSC scientist who is responsible for the project will recommend the data and information to be transmitted.)
- 2.5.5** The following information (scientist-to-scientist) may be transmitted directly between members of the various disciplines within the Free World; however, nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as excluding scientists from the foregoing policy provision, nor from applicable NASA procedures.

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- 2.5.5.1** All public information as defined in 1.1.11, including published technology utilization. (Requests for supplemental or backup information should be answered in the negative, suggesting that the requester watch for U.S. commercial developments and contact the appropriate U.S. firms.)
- 2.5.5.2** Published papers and/or technology utilization notes. (Any amplification of material shall be limited to the general scope of the original document.)
- 2.5.5.3** Papers (preprints), experimental data, and reports on the results of research grants or contracts. After approval of the experimenter, this material may be discussed between scientists on a private, privileged basis.

**NOTE:** Suggestions for possible projects involving international participation and cooperation are frequently developed from ideas and mutual interests discovered in scientist-to-scientist contacts. During all such contacts, great care must be exercised to avoid implying personal or official commitment or creating expectations on the part of foreign personnel. All such discussions must be promptly referred to Headquarters as provided by NPD 1360.2.

## **2.6 PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE**

Guidelines for preparing transmissible foreign correspondence vary depending upon the destination. For current procedures, consult ECCO.

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